

## **Assembly Joint Resolution No. 15**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 60**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 15—Relative to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 1, 2013.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AJR 15, Alejo. Voting Rights Act of 1965.

This measure would urge the Supreme Court of the United States to affirm the constitutionality of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

WHEREAS, Political sovereignty is the cornerstone of the democratic process in our country; and

WHEREAS, The remedy and redress of grievances against the government is ensured through the election of representatives who voice the concerns of the public; and

WHEREAS, The right to vote is a fundamental right of citizens of the United States and is the most important of civic rights and obligations; and

WHEREAS, The political sovereignty of our country is jeopardized when eligible people fail to vote; and

WHEREAS, American democracy is strengthened when we create and maintain voting systems that ensure the ability of all citizens to practice civic engagement by taking part in elections; and

WHEREAS, Voter discrimination based on race is not a thing of the past but a current reality that persists in places such as Monterey County, where discriminatory voting procedures have raised concerns as recently as 2002 and 2004; and

WHEREAS, The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ensures that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied on account of race or color; and

WHEREAS, The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution grants the Congress of the United States the authority to protect the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has exercised its authority to protect the right to vote by passing landmark legislation of the civil rights era known as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that seeks to abolish discriminatory procedures and barriers that disenfranchise minority voters; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has contributed to the immense progress in protecting and expanding the right to vote over the past few decades by ensuring that state and local election practices are just and fair; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has played, and continues to play, a critical role in preventing and addressing real threats to the right to vote of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 allows for adjustments as conditions change and is justified by the ongoing disproportionate enactment of discriminatory voting policies in the presently affected jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a reflection of the assurance provided by the United States Constitution that all Americans have the right to vote without facing discrimination, poll taxes, and other abuses; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has, time and again, reaffirmed the need for protection against abuses that might curtail the right to vote by renewing Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is currently under review by the Supreme Court of the United States; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature hereby urges the Supreme Court of the United States to affirm, as it has done on several occasions since 1965, the clear constitutionality of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which provides fundamental protections to the right of each citizen of the United States to vote and to have his or her vote counted; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Supreme Court of the United States, the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States, the United States Department of Justice, and the author for appropriate distribution.